WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF ART

Mlle. Ida Rubenstein, the Russian dancer and actress, by De La Gandara, at the Salon des Beaux Arts.

THE New Yorker who journeys down to Pittsburg to see the annual international display of pictures at the Carnegie Institute cannot suppress his wonderment and envy. He has to admit he has nothing like it at home nor a public art show within his reach of like importance and interest. He yearns to know why this is.

New York, which is the orifice of the "melting pot," would seem to be the natural choice for the location of an international art show, not Pittsburg. He scarcely goes so far as to formulate the wish to tear forcefully this jewel of an institution from its smoky setting and transfer it intact to the shores of the Central Park reservoir East, for that would be un-Christian, and besides Pittsburg really needs some art and is entitled to all it can honestly lay its hands upon. Rather we are inclined to whisper a "me too" to Pittsburg's patron saint.

Did Pittsburg cry for art, strive, struggle and work for art, by pure living and the spirit of sacrifice try to fit herself to deserve art that she got it thus bountifully at the last? Or was it merely her abject poverty in art that appealed to the champion giver of good things, who for a while breathed the Monongahelan atmosphere that seems to be death to plant life but fortunately increased Mr. Carnegie's elbow to the nth power? Whatever Pittsburg did or did not do, please to tell him, Mr. Alexander and all you others who have access to the potential ear, we will do too.

Is it pure living you demand? We will be pure. Is it struggle and work you demand? These too you shall have. If it is the other, the pitiful appeal of the poor, then we have you. We need the show. It can be proved. Therefore, say the word and we'll start the building to-morrow.

But don't laugh at us, Mr. Carnegie. Don't withhold the institute and laugh at us the way you did upon Founder's day. Be cold, if you must, but be not cruel!

CERTAINLY Mr. Carnegie had the time of his life at those exercises. And so did the Pittsburg portion of the audience. It smiled, chuckled and roared with laughter whenever Mr. Carnegie did, and especially at the jibe at the New Yorkers, who were forced to come to Pittsburg to see international art and who were sitting in the audience trying not to mind. It was hard to have to take it, though.

One thing we can say wholeheartedly, however, of the Laird. He is not in the least academic, although his international show is. It is the best academic show in the world, but still it is academic.

He sat in the centre of the flower bedecked stage, surrounded by trustees and other great dignitaries, with the new Technical Schools Symphony Orchestra, which was to play at a "Founder's Day" for the first time, immediately back of him. He sat there demurely during the preliminary addresses, but was the observed of all observers just the same. Suddenly the young people of the orchestra struck up the overture to the "Marriage of Figaro." It was more than the Laird could stand. He curled up his feet, and turned completely around in his great chair to look at them, presenting a clean back to the audience.

Everybody tittered, delighted, and the little girl in front of me with her hair tied tightly in pink ribbons said to her parents, "Isn't it just like him!" But the dignified trustees kept looking straight ahead into space. And when the wood wind gave, as it did in certain passages of this charming composition, an inflection not unlike the sound of bagpipes, Mr. Carnegie gave his neighboring trustee emphatic jabs with his finger, and we knew he was saying, "That's great! That's great!"

And so it was. And so is Mr. Carnegie. He deals in those touches of human nature that make all the world akin. His speech was listened to rapturously not only by the little girl with pink ribbons, but even by the New Yorkers, who excepted one or two sentences only. When, a little later, a most learned and informing address was delivered by another speaker, my little neighbor in pink promptly went to sleep, and half the audience suddenly recollected it was supper time and departed. No neater instance of the different effects that vital and academic art produce could have been devised.

NATURALLY we listened most carefully to that portion of the address touching on and appertaining to art, but we were not rewarded with all the information that we desired. We hoped we might be told just what ideal was in the founder's mind at the inception of this institute, and how much of it had been realized.

Judging by the bubbling and contagious optimism of the speaker, all of it had been realized and he was content with everything. Whether such institutions should be like beacon lights guiding the public or should drag fretfully behind the changing fashions, contesting each point and yielding only upon compulsion, in the manner peculiar to academies, he did not say. Instead he told us that artists were rarely in accord the one with the other, and once working for something with a committee of fourteen artists in New York he found that there were fourteen irreconcilable opinions as to what should be done. It was part of their genius, Mr. Carnegie thought, and he called attention, naughtily, to the circumstance that none of the trustees of the highly successful institution we are discussing was an artist.

He said too, with what proved afterward to be prophetic vision, that artists rarely approve of the prize awards. But he laughed at these and all other artistic frailties, in an ecstatic contemplation of the fruits of these geniuses gathered from the three corners of the earth, for the fourth corner, France, has been unaccountably neglected this year.

Because of this strange omission our friends of Pittsburg may not lay the flattering unction to their souls that they are up to date. They have a good academic show, better than Bouguereau's Salon, better than the Royal Academy, and better than the N. A. D. of New York, but just the same they cannot be up to date, ignoring modern France. The capital of the art world still is Paris, and because the artist enjoys more freedom there than anywhere else and more sympathetic comprehension there than anywhere else, the most important art innovations of the period bear the French hall mark. To ignore them is to be behind the times.

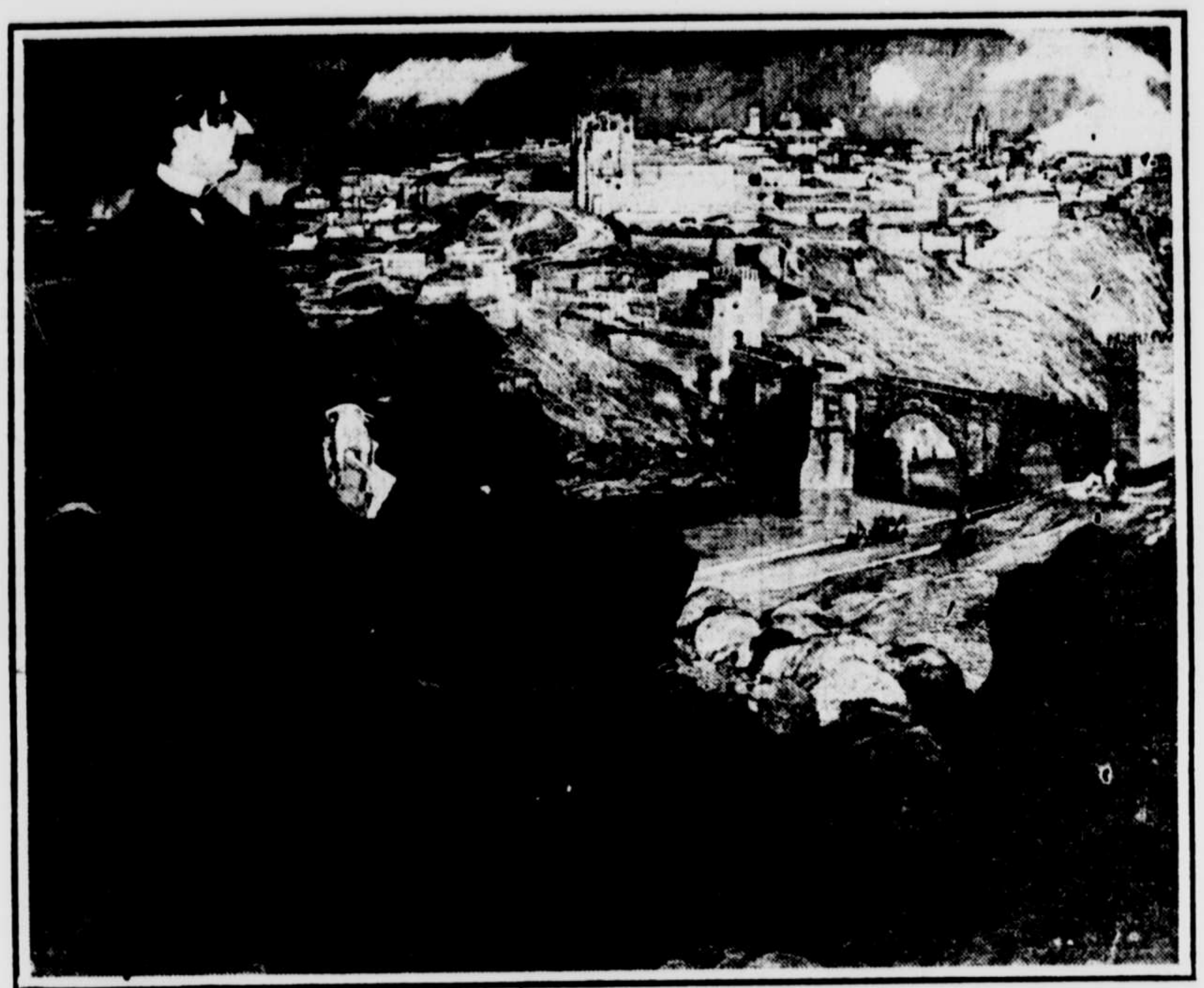
The most dangerous competitor to France in the arts is its ancient foe, Germany. Germany's renaissance is remarkable and seems to be gaining ground constantly. It has been declared by some observers to be the result of an effort of will upon Germany's part. Germany's commercial, scientific and musical achievements have been long acknowledged. There remained only the cachet that good taste in art gives. It was discovered that a reputation for good taste even accelerates business. The philosophers of that nation being appealed to bowed low to Emperor William and said, "Yes, your Majesty, there is no physical reason why we should not be painters and sculptors too. All that is necessary is to inquire into the conditions that produce art and duplicate the conditions here."

This Germany did and is still doing with marked success. Within the recent years she has caught up wonderfully and in some departments actually surpasses France. Two or three of her illustrated weeklies quite outdistance in artistic interest all other such publications in the world. Her posters too are now the best, for, for some unaccountable reason, this art has become a lost one in France and America, where it flourished lustily a few years ago. Her sculptors and painters are shaking off the old hardness of style, while losing nothing of the always famous German thoroughness.

WITH the Pittsburg ban upon France then, it is not a surprise to find these Germans capturing our interest. Heinrich Brune, Leo Putz and Franz von Stuck, all of Munich, are the chief entertainers in the international show. All three of them are exceedingly clever, well instructed and human. We shall not attempt to rate them positively in regard to merit, as we are no great believer in ratings, and these men are near enough to each other in strength to make such a thing unimportant anyway.

But for the moment we may confess to a very quick interest in Herr Brune's "Picnic in the Woods," because it is so freshly painted, so honestly colored and presents us with such attractive types. The canvas is a large one and the man and two women of the picture are seated upon the ground at luncheon. They are all strikingly forceful personalities, and there is something of a suggestion of drama, not because the artist goes out of his way to suggest drama but merely because the people breathe; and when an ardent gentleman and two ladies—or shall we say a gentleman and two ardent ladies? it makes no difference in the principle—sit down to an open air luncheon there is always the suggestion of a drama, whether you like it or not. Of course a well bred academician avoids such contingencies, but these Germans welcome them.

Leo Putz, in "The Shore," shows a lady, also of some force of character, stepping from a rowboat to a river bank. She is not so pretty a lady as she is important: somewhat on the Margaret Fuller type. The gray of the dress is very little removed in tone from the gray of the river. The painter has had a healthy interest in this technicality and in the arrangement of the picture, which gives the effect of casualness. It reminds one of a good Jugend cover, which, after all, is high praise.



Maurice Barres, by Zuloago. He is gazing at Toledo, the city of "El Greco," the subject of a book by Barres.

Franz von Stuck's is an imaginative "Summer Night," a decorative fantasy, with nymphs and, let us say, sailors, for they certainly are not shepherds, making off in a wild revel into the starry night. It is the sort of thing, when well done, that used to shock us awfully, and still does a little, in Pittsburg. At the private view, the other night, a lady, it could be seen she was a grande dame, entered the little room where the "Starry Night" hangs and chaffed three or four attendant gentlemen as she examined the pictures. She turned upon Herr von Stuck's canvas with a ready made phrase which died upon her lips as she saw what was going forward. Being a woman of the world, however, she was not nonplussed for long.

"Oh, ah, it's one of those things," said she, and with a calm and collected voice directed the attention of the gentlemen to the merits of the Sir Alfred East perfectly safe water color hanging near by. No New York grande dame could have done it better, we assure you. The gentlemen of the party appeared not to have seen the "Starry Night." Perhaps they were clever too.

It is possible that Grigori Bobrowsky, who is a Russian, should properly be classed with these victorious Germans, for he has won Munich medals. Certainly his "Portrait of a Woman" is excellent. It is painted with pale blues and grays, and the woman, who is bright eyed in a Southern manner, wears a black cape. The background has a faint indication of a curtain and there is a general frou-frou all through the picture that is different and interesting. There is still another German who shows a capital portrait, off in one of the little rooms, in a corner and skied, but you will have no difficulty finding it; it is in the early Whistler manner. The name unfortunately escapes us.

After the Germans come the American and English groups almost upon equal terms; poor France, thanks to the jury, lagging hopelessly in the rear.

Of native work, Robert Henri's "Thomas in His Red Coat," seen in New York at a Macdowell Club show, is as good as any. It may be said to share first honors with Cecelia Beaux's young woman who has returned home in broad black and white stripes, "After the Meeting." Little Thomas's coat is very red, and the background is very green. There is no subtlety or charm in the color, but plenty of dynamics. It is like the German work before the Renaissance set in. In spite of this hardness there is an intensity about the painting that makes the picture count. Miss Beaux's canvas is far more ingratiating, but a second glance at it finds all sorts of weaknesses in its showy style. The stripes of the gown do not indicate form, and the face of the sitter has given the artist more trouble than she has been able to conceal. The heftiness of the young Quakeress's hands is also disturbing. But Miss Beaux probably doesn't mean us to take this piece seriously.

Mr. Chase's fish picture is excellent as usual, but his portrait of Master Roland is unimportant. The young man of the picture is posed affectedly, grown up fashion, and the color and drawing are indifferent.

William Orpen could have led the English contingent had he sent almost any other of the canvases we recently saw in New York except those he did send. This portrait of himself is an absolutely dry, calculated, stringy, liney delineation of an individual who needs to be interpreted to become interesting. His smaller "Looking Towards the Sea" is his best Pittsburg piece, but it is not ambitious.

George Lambert with his big "Melpomene" and Sir Alfred East with his capital water color, therefore, rather walk away from him. Lambert's "Melpomene" is a big decorative affair, with the single figure of the tragic lady in dull and classic purples against the blue sky. It is a thoroughgoing, interesting piece of work and deserved far better hanging than it got. The big oil by Sir Alfred East is nothing at all, but his small water color is really worthy of all the attention that the gentleman who accompanied the grande dame gave it. It is not rich in color but is well designed and follows the best English traditions.

France's most ambitious contribution is the large Venus, called "La Nature Endormie," by Henri Caro-Delvaille. It is ambitious, but that is all. The fact is the immense canvas is painted in too small a manner. The touch is the miniature touch. Parts of the figure succeed, notably the torso, but the impression of the whole is weak. Weak as it is, however, it actually seems robust when compared with the still larger canvas of M. Caro-Delvaille's countryman Aman-Jean. Aman-Jean's picture is a portrait of his family meant to be decorative, but alas badly designed. The interpretation of the individuals is as distressing as possible. Each of the characters repines or ponders or yearns in a way to make the beholder wish they wouldn't. Poor M. Aman-Jean needs to arouse a sense of humor, not only in himself but in his family.

The two La Touche panels of ladies crossing fords with difficulties are charming but slight. They and the Maufra, the Manet, the Cottet, the Le Sidanier and the Mary Cassatt date from the France of some time ago. They show no illuminating light upon the doctrines associated with the names they bear and call for no discussion. M. Prinet's portrait of an "Author" in his library goes back even further than these for its inspiration. It is the kind of academical work, however, that we can face with fortitude, being at least workmanlike. Emile Blanche exhibits a portrait of an old English couple, called "Anniversary," which is more British than the British. By next year this painter will have become mid-Victorian, mark our words.

We have now touched upon all the features of the great Pittsburg International show, but have not mentioned the prize winners. They happen not to be features this year. This is a pity, but, of course, no great cause for excitement. Prizes cannot always be awarded in the ideal or logical fashion. It is possible by means of the "Honorable Mentions" to encourage young people who could not legitimately receive a medal, and no doubt some of these honors this year will have this desired effect. The giving of the chief prizes, though, cannot but confuse the public. Painters like Heinrich Brune, George Lambert, Franz von Stuck and Leo Putz won't be much distressed at missing honors. Men who can paint the way they do can afford to laugh at medals.

ART NEWS AND COMMENT.

TWO large figures in plaster by Paul Bartlett are about to be placed on the facade over the main entrance to the New York Public Library for purposes of study upon the part of the sculptor. They will remain in position probably until replaced by the completed marble figures.

Six symbolic single figures by Mr. Bartlett are to be placed along the ledge over the library entrance, and they present unusual technical difficulties. In the photograph here presented of the figures typifying "Religion" and "Romance" they appear to be "in the round," but they are not. Neither are they in relief. It is what the French call a "trompe l'oeil," a compromise between the two. The figures are intended to appear round, but are only about six inches in depth, to conform to the architectural setting that they adorn. On the flattened surface of these figures the carving of the folds of drapery and other details will be made in such a manner as to still further give the idea that these sculptures are round. It is to study just what depth should be given these surface cuttings that the sculptor will have the plaster models mounted into their position.

The problem is still further complicated by the fact that these figures must face a difficult light, that from the direct East until noon, and after that they are in shadow.

Figures of "Romance" and "Religion," by Paul Bartlett. For the acade of the New York Public Library.

Miss Kathryn Gray of New York has arrived in France, we learn from the Paris *Herald*, in time to have two charming miniatures accepted by the spring Salon.

The important collection of modern art belonging to John Quinn of New York city has recently received an addition in the shape of a unique and highly interesting souvenir of Gauguin. This is nothing less than an entire ceiling decoration, which the lamented artist painted in the little hotel where he lodged during his famous sojourn in Pont Aven, Brittany.

Mr. Quinn learned of the existence of the ceiling through Lucien Pissarro of England, son of Pissarro, the French impressionist, and through him arrangements were made to fetch it to America. The ceiling is of wood, rudely put together, and the nails that formerly held it in place were sawed off individually back of the wood that the painted surface might not be injured.

The decoration is simply designed. In the central panel two conventionalized swans are mirrored below in similar forms to balance the squarish scheme. Beyond the panel the wood is painted bluish green and there are some primitive fruits to take away the bareness. The thing is quite barbaric and there is more than a hint in it of the color that Gauguin was to find later in Tahiti in greater abundance.

Sincere lovers of nature will get considerable pleasure from John Mason's landscapes and decorative pieces now on exhibition in the Arlington Galleries. The canvases present contradictions, for there is a timidity of expression in them side by side with very decided aptitudes for poetry and invention. The pictures gave the impression to the present writer of being the work of a man of talent who had never met with recognition and who had in consequence worked apart from the throng and in discouragement.

Upon inquiry we learned that our guess was somewhere near the fact, and that even quite recently one of these quiet, unobtrusive but pleasant landscapes was rejected by the International jury at Pittsburg. This was unfortunate also for the International Show, which is certainly weak this year in works that have native tendencies. It was probably this slight, we are guessing again we confess, that piqued Mr. Mason into a one man show at last. He is sure to gain a few friends by it, however, and with the assurance that there are some who will at least look at his pictures may acquire a bolder utterance.

In the meantime he is to be congratulated upon the territory in which he has chosen to live. His "Miles From Anywhere," with its string of old buildings upon a river bank, and his "Old Cider Mill" portray touchingly beautiful spots. The "Old Cider Mill" is so fine a building, in fact, that we think a society ought to be formed to prevent any one but Mr. Mason from painting it. What a shame it would be to picture it in the Dutch, Barbizon, Claude Monetish or other foreign manners that our successful artists affect! Mr. Mason's brushwork is monotonous and thin and his color is far from being rich, but, thank Heaven, his style is American and founded upon a genuine love of nature.

ROBERT DE RUSTAFJAELL BEY, F. R. S. S., whose discoveries of Coptic manuscripts in the Thebaid have recently been widely discussed by European scholars, has just brought to America his collection of anthropological and Egyptian objects which represent ten years of exploration and collecting in upper Egypt.

His collection covers the dynastic and Ptolemaic periods in Egypt. One of his most notable finds is what he believes is the earliest known painting on canvas. This discovery he dates back to the Eighteenth Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom period. It was found near Thebes, in upper Egypt. This would give the picture an age of something over 3,500 years. The subject is symbolic and shows seven Egyptian figures about to perform an act of veneration before a representation of the goddess Hathor in the form of a cow.

Among the other objects he has brought together are 1,100 cylinders, button seals and scarabs, covering practically all the dynasties, beginning with the first. He has several rolls of papyrus in the demotic and Greek languages in the Ptolemaic period and a set of tunics or shirts, the earliest dating from the Eighteenth Dynasty, the others of the Ptolemaic, Roman, Byzantine, Coptic and Arabic periods.

Several pieces of sculpture were found, among them a figure of a man half sized and several figures of women with raised arms in dancing posture, with hair hanging down over their faces, covering their eyes and cropped off on a level with their shoulders. This sculpture work is estimated to be over 7,000 years old, because, as Mr. Rustafjaell explains, remains of races have been found who wore the same headdress.

To prove the old truism that there is nothing new in Egypt the explorer told of an experience of meeting an old woman who vividly described the battles fought by the French under Napoleon in Egypt when she was a girl. Her age was placed at 120 and she is still living near Thebes.

"When I called on her," said Mr. Rustafjaell, "she was too feeble to rise to her feet unaided but with the help of two sticks and her grandsons she greeted me in a hospitable way. She told me when she was past a hundred years old she got a new set of teeth. These were plainly visible although she was bald and her hands nothing more than claws.

"Every one in Egypt asks for backsheesh or a gift instead of begging, but this old woman insisted on giving me backsheesh. She produced a dozen fresh eggs in a basket, the age of which I later found to be 3,000 years.

"This illustrates that there is nothing new in Egypt. The people live just as their ancestors lived and they have no desire to change their mode of living."

After a month in New York the explorer will return to his camping place in upper Egypt and continue his work. His mission to this country is to bring material evidence to those interested in his particular form of endeavor that Egypt is really the cradle of our earliest civilization. Among his published works are the results of his Bering Sea labors and "The Light of Egypt," a volume in which he records five thousand years of Egyptian history. In the latter work he tells of the finding of important manuscripts discovered near the remains of a Coptic monastery near Edfu, upper Egypt. These finds are regarded by Egyptologists as of great importance as a contribution to predynastic and early Christian records. They include seven Coptic volumes, a Greek codex on vellum, a dozen Greek papyri and fragments of a book in the Nubian language. The most valuable of these is perhaps the Coptic script which gives an account by the Apostle Bartholomew of Christ's descent into hell.